

# UPDATE

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## Summer Travel

Each year, millions of Americans travel abroad for vacation or to visit friends and relatives. By the year 2000, approximately 60 million international passengers were departing by air from the United States annually. Over a third of these international travelers visited developing countries, where the risk of contracting infectious diseases is increased. An estimated 50 percent of international travelers become ill as a result of their travels. In 2000, 1,021 of the cases of malaria reported to CDC were acquired abroad. Of the approximately 400 cases of typhoid fever each year in the U.S., 70 percent are acquired while traveling internationally. Most international travel-related health problems are preventable, however, travelers are often unaware of health risks, lack an understanding of the measures necessary to avoid them or both.

To prevent infectious diseases among international travelers, the Division of Global Migration and Quarantine (DGMQ) provides health-care providers and the public with current CDC health recommendations for international travel. These recommendations are available on the Travelers' Health website and as a textbook for health-care providers, "Health Information for International Travel," or the "Yellow Book". The Yellow Book was updated in May 2003 to include a new chapter on traveling with children, new text on scuba diving and high-risk travelers, new recommendations on malaria prophylaxis and yellow fever vaccination and expanded text on altitude sickness, to name a few.

The CDC recommends travelers visit a health-care provider 4-6 weeks before their departure date to allow time for vaccinations to take effect. Travelers are reminded of other measures to stay healthy:

- Practice frequent and thorough hand-washing with soap and water or a waterless, alcohol-based hand rub.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself and remember to **boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it**.
- If visiting an area where there is risk for malaria, take malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed.
- Use insect repellent containing up to 50 percent DEET, according to the manufacturer's directions.

### Website Addresses:

Travelers' Health - [www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/)

The Yellow Book - [www.cdc.gov/travel/yb/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yb/index.htm)

***The State Health Plan***  
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SOUTH CAROLINA BUDGET AND CONTROL BOARD  
EMPLOYEE INSURANCE PROGRAM  
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